

Which some Informations about Mr. Hepburn, and Advices to Dividers.

By the said Mr. WILLIAM VETCH. R

Prov. 18. 17. He that is first in his own Cause seemeth Just : But his Neighbour searcheth him.

Prov. 26. 12. Seest thou a Man wise in his own Conceit ? There is more hope of a Fool than of him.

Luke. 9. 25. For what is a Man advantaged, if he gain the whole World and lose himself, or be cast away ?

Luke. 17. 23. And they shall say to you, See here, or see there : Go not after them, nor follow them.

Act. 20. 30. Also of your own selves shall Men arise, speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them.

D R U M F R I E S.

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TO THE
Christian Reader.

Christian READER,

WH O wrote this Book call'd Humble Pleadings I know not, if it wanted not Wit, I wou'd thought it had been done by some Jesuite. But if it be defective there, I am sure none of that Set in the habitable World, could have forged more lies and spewed more Malice against the Church of Christ in Scotland than the Author of that Book has done, as is clearly proven by the Answer to the first Part of these Humble Pleadings, where their lies about the Church of Scotland are clearly detected, and their Objections refuted; and seeing Mr Hepburn with his Party treats the purest Church of Christ in the habitable World in such a Manner, Its no wonder that the Pious and Learned Mr. Meldrum now in Glory, with my self, be so aspersed by them, but as the Author of that Answer to the first Part of that infamous Book, Vindicates that great Man Mr. Meldrum from their hellish Calumnies, so I cannot but let the World know the Grounds of their Malice against me, and that is because I discovered Mr. Hepburn's taking the Oath of Supremacy at London, with his wicked design against the Famous Doctor Gilpine, at Newcastle.

Dear Reader, I being now an old dying Man; and finding the Designs of that Party, to be no less than the ruine of this Church, I having had Occasion to know more of Rome's Designs against the Protestant Interest, than some others, Having these Things following in these Sheets, amongst the rest of the Memoirs of my Life, and God calling to me in his Providence by the appearing of a Book in the World with such Wicked Designs, I could not before I leave this World but let the present Age know so much, that the Government both Civil and Ecclesiastick might be upon their Guard; and before I close this short Preface, I must make this one observe, and I shall appeal to any of the old Sufferers who are yet living about it, and its thus:

That Mr. Hepburn's People (tho' they call themselves Whigs,) the Old Whigs who lived betwixt the 60 and 88 Years of God, were they Living wou'd think shame of them, for there are Numbers of the greatest Pretenders to strictness amongst them who will be Drunk especially at Burials, will Swear, and be as ready to Cheat in Bargaining as the greatest Ruffines in the Country side, for which I can appeal to all the Country round about, and ere long, if this be challenged it will be made out to the disgrace of the Party. All that I shall add is, That my Conscience gives me not the lie in any of the Particulars in this Paper, and if God give not Mr. Hepburn Repentance for the hurt he has done to this Church, I am convinc'd that his reckning to God will be great, and his Memory stink to following Ages were it for no more, but his not giving nor receiving the Sacrament, of the Lord's Supper all his Life Time for any Thing I know, and bindering others from administering the same; wishing that GOD may let him see his Sin in his misleading a poor Ignorant People, and grant him Repentance: Is and shall be, the serious desire to GOD of,

At Drumfries,

Aug. 2d. 1716.

Christian Reader,

A well-wisher and old Servant to

the Church of Christ in Scotland.

A N

ANSVVER

To Mr. John Hepburn, pretended Minister of Orr, or to him, that, for his discredet wrote that Book, called Humble, but more truly Saucey, Subtile and Lying Pleadings, especially to that Part, wherein he calls Mr. Vetch Minister of Drumtries, a gross Calumniator Page 308, 309. In saying that Mr. Hepburn had never valid Ordination.

Time about is fair Play,
Ab ovo : I shall shew his Way.

THIS Book never came to my Hand, but within these few Months, and what I write here is to let all concerned know that I coming from my House at Harnam-hall in Northumberland to see my Friends in the Merse, I called to visit Mr. Thomas Donaldson, Minister of Smelsum near Kelfo who yet kept his Kirk, being an Old Minister, and there at his House I happened to see Mr. William Eliot, late Minister (I think) of Tarrow. They were two Old, Learned, Pious and Grave Ministers, and my intimate acquaintances, who among other Discourses, happened to tell me of one Mr. John Hepburn, a young Man, who had been in a Gentlemans Family near by, and they heard that he was going over the Border to Mr. Semple, and some other Ministers to pass his Tryals, which they were sorry for, being as they judged very unfit for the Work; Especially in these Ticklish Times, having neither found Learning nor solid Judgment; and venting some wild Notions already in Discourse: We would think it were worth your while said they who is intimately acquaint with these Brethren to

see if you can put a stop thereto. Upon which desire, in stead of going to my Brother's, I went to my good Friend *Alexander Hume's* House all Night, and being informed there, that the meeting of these Ministers, was at a Town on the *English* side nigh *Tweed* called *Wark*, almost over against *Coldstream*; I went thither next Morning and told them what Ministers had sent me, and what was my Errand, viz. to desire them to sist from Licencing Mr. *John Hepturn*, to whom these great Men had given the abovementioned Character, seeing he was like to be an ill Tool in the Church of GOD, (which has proved too true;) Upon which they ceased from licencing him at that Time. But afterward being influenced by some of his Friends viz. *Henry Hall* of *Hauchhead* who was a very good Man in the main, but inclined somewhat that way, and some others of that Kidney they ventured to License him, which has been to the great prejudice of the Church of Christ. For besides the discoveries he gave of it in *Scotland*, he came and Preached near *Newcastle* against the Oath of Allegiance to King *Charles II.* and was like to break many off from the famous Doctor *Gilpins* meeting thereby. But a *Scots* Minister who was invited by the Doctor to Preach hard by *Newcastle*, upon his absence stopt that Plague, and Plot of his, and so he went to *London*. I happening to go thither shortly after, stopt his Ordination as long as he staid there, and tho' it was said that Mr. *Frazer* of *Brae*, his Friend and Country-Man influenced Mr. *Law* and some others to Ordain him, yet he has never produced (so far as I hear) a Document thereof to this Day. (tho' he boasts in his Book, that he can bring twenty) and therefore ought to be held as unordain'd untill he produce his Testimonials, which any Body would think, he would have done e're now, if he could.

And It's well known at *London*, that while he was there he haunted among the wild Gang, lodging sometimes (as I heard) in Houses that were of that Kidney, where I have good ground to believe, that some *Popish* *Emissaries* in Protestant Masquerade, got wit of him, with some other Light-headed *Scots* Dominies, and these Persons forsooth pretended to the Purity and Perfection of our *Presbyterian* Reformation, and thought it not fit to join with others that would not come up their length.

For this was one of the ways devised at *Rome*, and made use of in *Britain* and *Ireland*, for Marring the prosperity of the *Protestant* Interest as you shall hear anon.

Just

Just like one of the three Clubs or Cabals at *Edinburgh* in *anno* 1689; One of them was highly and zealously *Whigish* for Screwing up our Reformation to the highest pitch, and this was done out of Picque by the leading Man of that Faction to break it to pieces, because they were baulked in their Expectations, of the high Places in the Ministry, that they aimed at.

Another Cabal was for following wisely and leasurely the true steps of our worthy Ancestors in carrying on a Reformation according to true Presbyterian Principles and Measures, conform to the Word of GOD.

A third Party was high Tory endeavouring to mar all *Presbytry*, and bring in, (as they call'd it) a moderat *Prelacy* like the Church of *England*, these strugled hard until the Earl of *Melvil*'s Parliament decided the Matter. It's said some got great Bribes to delay it, and if possible to bring it to the last mention'd Model, of moderat *Episcopacy*.

After the discovery of the Popish Plot, I being at *London*, was very desirous to be acquainted with Dr. *Oats*, the Author of the Discovery; thinking he would let me in to see a little further into the Intrigues of *Rome*; and it happened that I was introduced to his Acquaintance, by a Person that I perceived the Doctor to have a great veneration for. After I had Cultivate a firm Friendship with him, we fell a talking of the many wild Notions, Opinions and Divisions, &c. that abounded in *England*, and were propagate in some Places of *Scotland*. Well says the Dr. I'll tell you the rise and beginning of all these Things.

There was never any thing that fell out in the Compas of a Hundred Years before, that stunn'd the *Pope* and his *Conclave* so much as when these three things fell out together, viz. first the Parliaments turning out the Bishops of *England*. 2dly. *Oliver Cromwel* his arrival at the Protectorship, & 3dly. these things following upon the back of what the very Rev. Divines of *Westminster* had done: Which three concurring together was like to give the greatest stop to their Projects and Measures they had used hitherto for Reviving and Re-establishing *Popery* again in *Britain* and *Ireland*, of any thing that ever came their Way.

Upon which the *Pope* calling all the Cardinals, held a *Conclave* for many Weeks, consulting what was next best to be done, now at this odd Juncture, for marring the Propagation of the Protestant Interest in these Lands. And at length concluded to call to *Rome*, a great many of the Learned'st, and Cunningest Men; that belonged to *Britain* and *Ireland*, who were serving the *Pope* in higher or lower Offices, in the Sec of *Rome*

and

and adviseing with them what Opinions (I may say Errors) they were fittest to Propagate under a Protestant Profession; some of them *Quakerism*, some *Anabaptism*, some *Independency*, some *Familism* some *Antinomianism*, some of them high Screwed *Presbyterianism*. As for a Tool for marring our true *Presbyterian* Reformation, and the Protestant Religion as any of the forementioned Errors, and they were sent hither to propagate whatever Opinions they could best do, and how well they Succeeded in *Cromwell's* Time, is notourly known (says the Dr.) to the Confounding of the Protestant Religion, and it was so well managed as it accomplished the End, and was very acceptable to his Holiness.

Now in the next Place it's to be noticed, that they repeated the same Measures, sending over fresh Messengers to carry on their Designs, when King *Charles II.* was restored, for fear the *Covenanters* should oblige him to carry on the old Reformation at his Return, that he had Sworn to ere he was Banished. But its credibly believed that the *Pope* prevented him from doing that, when he sent his *Nuncio* to *Breda*, and took an Oath of the King, that when he should find himself settled in his Kingdom, he should Restore the *Catholick* Religion therein, and its worth our Observation, that the new sent Emissaries at that Time did with much vigor revive again these old spread Opinions in *Oliver's* Days, and engaged many young Divines in *England*, and some in *Scotland* in that Work, never letting them know that they were *Popish*, and allowed them Sellaries, paying them at every Term for their Pains.

And to Homologate this, the Learned and Pious *Ferviswood* having fled to *London* about the 1682 Year of GOD, with the *Lairds* of *Rowallan*, and the two *Cessnocks*, *Montgomery* of *Leinsbaw* and others, and they employing me to get them quiet Rooms, I kept *Ferviswood* in the Lodging with my self being my Countryman and Acquaintance, and talking one Day upon this Subject about the abounding of Errors; by means of *Romish Emissaries*: Says he, Il'e tell you a Remarkable Story to evidence that Truth.

I happened says he to be at *London* after the King's Restoration, and meeting with a Gentleman upon the Exchange that had been my fellow Traveller Abroad, he was desirous to name an Hour for him and me to take a Bottle of Wine, and talk together upon our former Travels and present Affairs, and among other Things we fell to talk upon Religion, and how all that Reformation that our pious Ancestors had advanced so great a length was like to be extinguished through the abounding of Errors, that were so much spread through these Lands, and that

no doubt *Antichrist* had a great hand in it. I heard says the Gentleman *A Quaker* out of Curiosity last Sabbath Afternoon, one of the smartest and Cunningest Fellows that ever I heard all my Life, I am sure he will do much hurt, I wish said he, You would go hear him next Day. *Ferviswood* said, he liked it not on the Sabbath, but if it were on a Week Day he could do it. However the Gentleman Persuaded him and they went together, he declared to me that he was a Man of so great Cunning and Mettal, that he admired him, and ere the Discourse ended, he was persuaded he had seen him Abroad in some publick Trust, in the *Romish* See, tho' he was now in disguise, and he resolved to find him out. After the Meeting was dissolved he went to him, and told that he had been invited to hear him, and that he had discoursed so well to carry his purposes that he had Raised several Scruples in his Mind, about which he would be content to talk with him alone some Day, if he knew where to find him: Says the *Quaker*, I keep a Shoe-sellers Shop in such a Lane, where afterwards *Ferviswood* found him, and carrying him to a Tavern, where he proposed his Scruples, which he only contrived to occasion their Meeting: After they had talked upon the Subject very warmly, he says to the *Quaker*, 'I cannot think it's long since you took up this Opinion, 'for I verily think (tho' under this disguise,) you are that *Scots* Gentleman, that when I travelled, was one of the Great Masters of the 'Colledge of *Dowry*, and you invited me to Dine with you after our Acquaintance. One Day after Dinner, you used many Arguments with 'me to turn *Popish*, and I might be advanced to some great Post in the 'Romish See, all which for a while he strenuously denied. But says *Ferviswood*, you need not deny it, for if ye do, I'll instantly cause apprehend you, as a *Papist* in Masquerade, and this will find you out to 'your hurt, but if you will be free with me, and tell me the Motives 'that induced you to come on this Errand, I will conceal the Matter.

Upon which, after Engagements to one another he told him, he was the Man, and that the *Scots* and *English* were sent for to *Rome*, as they had been in *Cromwel's* Time, to act as they did in that Day with as great Vigour now in *King Charles's* Time. And they having Liberty to make Choice of what Opinions they were most able to Propagate, he Chose *Quakerism*, and now (says he) none of us appear for *Popery*.

Now this last Story so well attested confirms the first by *Dr. Oars*, who at another Meeting with me, and speaking upon the old Subject, took out his Pocket Book, and let me see four *Scots* Mens Names that had taken on with *Popish* *Emillaries*; but they knew not that they were such,

for their Work was to prosecute and Propagate *Presbyterian* Principles: Screwed up to the highest pitch, and these four following Names, I read with my Eyes in his Pocket Book, who were Pensioners of Rome, then entered *incognito*; and were to be payed according to their Diligence. viz. Mr. *John Hepburn*, Mr. *David Houslein*, Mr. *Archbald Gladstains*, and Mr. *William Houslein*. For *Gladstains* he lived not in that Way long to do harm in his Country of *Tiviotdale*, for falling Heir to his Brother's Estate of *Whitlaw* he left that Course. For Mr. *David Houslein*, he has left the Marks of his divisive and erroneous Courses behind him in *Tinwald*, and the Country about: He went afterwards to *Ireland* and turned (as its said) a *Popish* Priest: And it's notourly known that Mr. *William Houslein* for his foolish, Scandalous, and Erroneous Courses, was Excommunicate through the West of *Scotland* and this Country. The greatest piece that ever he wrote, to shew his Learning and Zeal against *Popery*, was a Pamphlet called, *Scotland pulling down the Gates of Rome*; but it did not Cover his Knavery. And as for Mr. *Hepburn*, the Ministers and People of this Country of the South and West of *Scotland*, have had sufficient proof of his carrying on the same Design, under the disguise of strict *Presbyterianism*.

And e're I go further, I think it's worth our special Observation, having before heard at what pains the Pope and his Party were at, to Marr our Reformation in *Britain* and *Ireland*, both in the time of *Oliver Cromwel*, and of King *Charles II*. As much as they could by the Measures they followed, that we need not doubt, but as great Diligence and Care will be taken; both in sending out Emissaries, and using all possible Means to obstruct the Reformation of the Protestant Religion, now when we have by the good Providence of GOD King *George* upon the Throne, whom we expect will be as Vigorous an Asserter of it, as any that's gone before him, and to verifie this, we need only to take a look of the late *Rebellion*, and what their Designs were; and as we have had such a Testimony already, the ill improvement of it may bring more.

When I mention *Oliver Cromwel*'s being advanced to the Government of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, and of the Plantations Abroad belonging thereto, without taking Notice of the manner of his coming to it, either to justify or condemn it: I think it proper to take Notice of three Remarkable Periods in which the Protestant Interest was in great Danger to be utterly destroyed, but that at all these Times the Majesty of GOD, the King and Head of his Church, most undeservedly in his good and Gracious Providence raised up those Remarkable Deliverers for it's Preservation.

The

The first was the Valiant Oliver Cromwel, when King Charles I. and his Complices at Home and Abroad, had brought the Protestant Interest to the very brink of Destruction, as is evident by the Massacre in *Ireland*, and the great advances that were made elsewhere. And the Historian says, that Cardinal Richlieu's Scarlet was deep dyed in the Blood of the poor *English* in this Massacre: And if the Parliament in their Day, and Cromwel in his Day had not preserved it, In all outward appearance it had been utterly lost, History tells us how he stopt the Persecution in *Sejey* and other Places. I Remember what the famous Historian Clarendon says on this head. ' Oliver Cromwel acted a surprizing Part in the World, which he could never have done if he had not been inspired with uncommon Qualities, and no Man can Reproach him, tho' never so justly, but at the same Time they must commend him, and certainly he was a great ill Man. GOD can preserve his Church by what Instruments he pleases, yea by means very unlikely and unexpected.

I might tell you the Old Plot was carryed on still and like to break out in another Massacre in *Ireland* in King Charles the seconds Reign anno 1663. Of the Protestants by the *Irish*, Instigated by the *French* King, which you may read at large in *Plunkets Tryal*, and this proved by *Papish* Witnesses, but Providence stopt it till King James came to the Throne.

This leads to the second Remarkable Period of the Protestant Churches danger, when King James came to the Throne who then pulled off the Mask, and with a great dale of boldness and zeal, resolved to set up the *Catholick Religion* all *Europe* over: But the Divine Providence, put a Remarkable stop in his way, by raising up that Noble and prudent Prince of *Orange*, and making him a happy Instrument for our Delivery, both as to our Sacred and civil Concerns: For which the Glorious King *William* will be renowned in History, as long as the World stands, this was a Deliverance so unexpected, so surprizing, and yet so seasonable as never was the like. But alas the bad improvement we made of it, gave abundant Encouragement and Opportunity for the *Catholicks* and their profane Complices to carry on their old Design.

And this leads me to the third lamentable Period of the Danger that the Protestant Interest was like to fall into, By the once admired Queen *Anne*, for doing that which all her Predecessors could never Effectuate. *Viz.* in making up a Remarkable UNION betwixt *Scotland* and *England*. She did Reign well while under good Counselers, as *Joash* did

under *Jehojada* as his great Counselor, but when he dyed, all went wrong, so did it fare with her when some dyed a *Natural* and others a civil Death, after which its well known, that she and her Counselors had laid a Design to bring in the Pretender, and by the Congress at *Utrecht* was like to make us a Prey to *France*, &c. I cannot tell the many Ingredients that made our Case very dangerous. But our Gracious GOD who had so many Times delivered us in his great Goodness and Mercy has done it once more, tho' there were many bad aspects in our Horizon Prefaging the Contrary, and that by bringing the great King *George* peaceably to the Throne, over the Belly of many black and stormy Tempests, hanging in the Hemisphere round about him, two of these Clouds fell down in desperate like plump Showers, as if they would have deluged two Kingdoms at once; But they were so wonderfully dissipated, that the Beholders ought to have cryed out with the *Psalmist* 118. 13. &c. *This is the doing of the Lord, and wonderful in our Eyes.* But whether that Deliverance was well improven, is doubted by many, I think it would do no harm either to the Courtier or Country Man, to Read and consider the 1 of the *Kings* 20 Chap.

But having thus far digressed, I return to Mr. *Hepburn*, who in the whole tract of his Carriage, unto this Day, has evidenced to a Demonstration his Carefulness and Faithfulness, as much as ever any *Romish* Pensioner did, to follow their prescribed Measures, and deserves his Salary, as well as any that ever they employed, for he has hatch- ed a great Brood, many of whom are feathered long since, and flown from him, and become Masters of that Art themselves, and outdo him by many new Measures superadded to the old, and I doubt not but now they hold in *Capite* as well as he does, and are as well payed. What is here said needs no better Attestation, but the Reading of his and their Processes, and observing their daily actings to convince all Persons fully of the Truth thereof.

By what is said against me in particular, it's abundantly confirmed that this Piece such as it is, is not of his making, but of some Persons, that has been sent to him from the same Fountain, in *Malquerade*, for his assistance, they finding him unable in himself to manage it, and that which makes the Manager stumble not only about Me, but several other Things in that Book is his misinformation, in taking up Things by a false Report. For Mr. *Hepburn* himself knew very well that I stopt his Ordination at *London* as much as I could, the time I stayed there, and if Mr. *Frazer* of *Bras*, engaged the Ministers to concur with him after-

afterward to it, is more than I know, but seeing he has not produced one of his twenty boasted of Documents for his Ordination until this Day, he ought not to be believed more than others that cannot produce theirs.

Allo I do defie him or any others to make good by sufficient Witnesses, that ever they heard me say, either in publick or private, That Mr. *Hepburn* was not Ordained; therefore untill he prove by honest Witnesses, that Mr. *Verch* said so, he must be held as the *Calumniator*.

I own indeed, that I said both in Publick and Private, that Mr. *Hepburn* was never legally Called or Settled Minister of *Orr*, and yet the *Pleader* says, he was legally Called, both to *Orr* and *Kirkgunston*, what he means by so saying, I do not understand, except that he has a Love to both the Stipends, which he might have sought a Certificate of together with that of *Orr*, from the *Presbytery* of *Drumfries* anno.

Or else, That he loves Pluralities, which favours of *Episcopacy* and *Popery*, and as I doubt that he himself knowes, what he is as to his own Principles of Religion, and Form of Government, so I Question if any other Knows it: But this I know of him, from a more than Twenty Years Experience, that by his doings he has been one of the worst Sights that the Church of Scotland has seen in this Age: For he could never find a true *Presbyterian* Party to join with either in dispensing of Ordinances, or partaking of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper unto this Day, and I think that no History of the Church, can give an account of such another, but those of his own Brood and Kidney.

Another Reason why I know this Book is none of his Writing, is because he had never the Brain for it, such it is: For it's abundantly known, that in all his Processes, the Papers he gave in were none of his drawing; and that he is counted not only (as I said before) a Man of no solid Principles in Religion: For as I Remember, about the time of his Deposition, the Great Mr. *Kirkton* in Answer to some that were speaking for him, said these Words, *Moderator*, This Man ought never to have been a Minister, for I perceived him Ignorant of the very fundamental Principles of Religion, I found he understood not the Nature and way of Justification by Faith, when I discoursed him upon the Point: But also I am sure, he could never have Mowbanded the Language nor Cited the Authors named in his *Humble Book*, of which I can give no other Character but this, That it is, a malicious, bitter and *Jacobitish* Piece, smeared over with *Jesuitical* Cream; as most of it's Pages will testify, especially pag 118, and 119. Where he reflects more bitterly and maliciously against his present Majesty than the greatest *Jacobite* in the Country. Also he

Bellshes out his Malice most unseasonably, before ever the King came to the Crown, and ere he could know what Engagements would be proposed by the Government unto his Majesty, or what Answers to these Proposals, either with respect to the Sacred or Civil Government of these Lands his Majesty would return, as is clear from the Book it's being Printed before his Majesty's coming to these Lands.

Also page 193 and 194. Where he would make the World believe, that when a Minister takes a Lawful Oath to the King, he takes it as a Qualification of a Minister, while as its neither Imposed by the one, or taken by the other, but as the Qualification of a Subject. Now if Mr. *Hepburn* bogled so at the *Oath of Allegiance*, what *Pocket* was his Conscience in, when he took both the *Oath of Supremacy and Allegiance*, ere he got out of *Gate-house Prison* in *London* to which he was Committed, by the King's particular Order, when he was carried Prisoner from *Tork* to *London*, at the Business of *Botwell-Bridge*? For tho' the two young Men that were Committed with him were set at Liberty upon their taking the *Oath of Allegiance*; Yet the King said, *That he being a Church Man should take both the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy ere he got out*; And when honest Mrs. *Gaine* his *Anabaptist* Landlady, (where no doubt he and the *Romish Presbyterian Emissaries* frequently met and made their Pyes, and who afterward suffered under King *James*;) at his desire Borrowed twenty Guineas from several good People, they requiring only a Bond from him, to Repay it when he was able; he absolutely Refused; thinking they should have given Godly Mr. *Hepburn* it freely, and so he missed his design of Bribing, a Courtier to get him off without Swearing. Now when he was thus disappointed, he joins with a bad set of Prisoners for cutting of the Prison Windows, and coming down on Ropes made of their Blankets, he being left hindmost, the Blankets broke with him, and he was left lying lame at the Foot of the Wall; where the Jaylor found him next Morning, and laid him fast. Thus finding all his endeavours to escape prove ineffectual, he Resolved (it's like) to take all the Oaths the King would impose ere he wanted Liberty to Preach the Gospel of Christ. But I am of Opinion that Christ never allowed any Man to take sinful Measures and Ways to serve him. For which Reasons and many others which I could adduce, he never either really or truly Preached the Gospel of Christ, and if he has only preached it pretendedly (as is too too evident by the Measures he has taken hitherto) he will not want his Reward. And I cannot but still look upon him as a Deposed Minister, seeing that Inferior and doubtful Judicatory

catory could not loose him. Also it was questioned by the Assembly, though the *Humble* (alias) *Saucy Pleader* says the contrair; who has also the Boldness to reflect bitterly upon the *Oath of Abjuration*, and the Ministers that took it; Nay, not only so, but upon the Venerable Assembly, and their Advice thereanent, which no sober Person would have done at that Rate; But is Consonant enough to a Man of his Charecter, such as this Paper describes him to be, but for the Exoneration of the *Furors* of this Country, I hope none concerned will think it unfit that I here insert an Extract of the Paper given into the Court, declaring the Sense wherein they took it. Which is as follows.

At *Drumfries* October 28th 1712

Sederunt of the Justices of the Peace of the Shire of *Drumfries*, met at their Quarter Sessions. *Alexander Fergusson* of *Craigdarroch*, *William Greirson* Younger of *Lag*, *John Sharp* of *Hoddam*, *James Grierson* of *Kepinock*, *William Coupland* of *Collistoun*, *John Bell* of *Crowdieknow*, *William Alves* Commissar Principle of the Commissariat of *Drumfries*, *John Crosbie* of *Holme* Provost of *Drumfries*, *William Johnstoun* of *Beirholme* and *James Carruthers* of *Roberihill*.

The said *William Alves* Praeses.

The which Day Compeared Mr. *William Vetch* one of the present Ministers of *Drumfries* with the hail Ministers after Named, and who for himself, and in Name of the saids Ministers, Produced and gave in the Declaration underwritten, Subscribed by him and them.

The Tenor whereof Follows.

WE the Ministers of the established Church of Scotland, in the Synod of *Drumfries*, and Sheriffdom thereof, are come hither to take the Oath of Abjuration, required of us by Authority, for our Church Government, obliges us to understand it only in a Sense that is not any ways contrair to, or inconsistent with the true Protestant Religion, Presbyterian Church Government, Worship and Discipline Established by the said Act, conform to an Address of this Church to Her Majesty, and Graciously Received by her.

And therefore we do declare, that we take it only in the said Sense, and that we Reckon our selves no ways obliged from any thing in this Oath to approve of, or support the Hierarchy or Ceremonies of the Church of England, or any thing

thing contrary to the said Presbyterian Church Government, Worship and Discipline. The which Declaration we conceive to be agreeable to the true meaning of the said Oath. And therefore crave the same to be Recorded in the Justices of the Peace of the Sherrifdom their Books, at the only Sense wherein we take the Oath. Signed by us at Drumfries the Twenty Eight of October, One Thousand seven Hundred and Twelve Years, Sic Subscribitur. William Vetch, Alex. Robison, Geo. Mulligane, Pa. Hume, Tho. Goldie, Jo. Lawrie, Wm. Aikman, Ja. Murray, Jo. Dunlop, Sim. Riddel, Ja. Black, Ro. Darling, Ja. Gowenlocks, Ja. Corrie, Dav. Grahame, Ro. Patoun, Jo. Summervail, Jo. Pollock, Geo. Young, Tho. Tod, Jo. Mein, Fr. Lindsay, Jo. Nisbet, Rob. Blair, Ja. Short, Dav. Wightman, Jo. M^c Murdo, Pet. Rae. Which they desired might be read over, and thereafter Recorded, in their Sederunt Books. Which being Read over, the Justices of the Peace allowed the same to be insert ut supra, and declared they would administer the Oath of Abjuration in the true Sense and meaning thereof, and in the express Words as contained in the Act of Parliament. Thereafter in Presence of the Justices, Compeared Mr. William Vetch one of the Ministers of Drumfries, Mr. Alex. Robison, Minister of Tinwald, Mr. Pat. Hume, Minister of Kirkmichael, Mr. Tho. Goldie Minister of Kirkpatrickjuxta, Mr. Jo. Lawrie, Minister at Moor-kirk of Eskdale, Mr. Wil. Aikman, Minister of Ruthwall, Mr. James Murray, Minister at St. Mungo, Mr. Jo. Dunlop, Minister at Mousewaid, Mr. Sim. Riddel, Minister at Tinneran, Mr. Ja. Black, Minister at Gratney, Mr. Ro. Darling, Minister at Ews, Mr. Ja. Gowanlock, Minister at Kirkpatrick Fleming, Mr. Ja. Corrie, Minister at Hoddam, Mr. Da. Grahame, Minister at Langholme, Mr. Ro. Patoun, Minister at Drumfries, Mr. Jo. Summervail, Minister at Carlawerock, Mr. John Pollock, Minister at Glencairn, Mr. Geo. Young Minister at Hutton, Mr. Tho. Tod, Minister at Durisdeer, Mr. Jo. Mein, Minister at Westerkirk, Mr. Fran. Lindsay, Minister at Johnstoun, Mr. Jo. Nisbet, Minister at Newabby, Mr. Ro. Blair, Minister at Holywood, Mr. Ja. Short Minister at Drisdale, M. Da. Wightman, Minister at Applegirth, Mr. Jo. M^cmurdo, Minister at Terthorrald, and Mr. Peter Rae, Minister at Kirkbride, and craved that the Justices might Administer to them the Oath of Abjuration, which accordingly the Justices did Administer to them, and they did Swear and Sign the same on a Sheet of Parchment, Adhering always to the above Declaration. Extracted furth of the Sederunt Books of the Shire of Drumfries by me Jo. Neilson Clerk.

The next thing that seems proper to be done for notifying to the World, Mr. Hepburn's unparalleled Irregularities in his pretended Ministerial

herial Function, is the Collecting of the many Procelles, that are lying before the *Presbyteries, Synods, Commissions, General Assemblies of the Kirk,* and the *Privy Council*, together with the Protestation against the Kirk of Scotland, that he with Mr. Taylor and Gilchrist gave in to the Synod of Drumfrick, anno.

All which will give Ample and Repeated Proofs of what has been here said; This being a Work proper to the Judicatures of this Church, both for Vindication of themselves and of the Cause, I forbear to meddle with it, and wishes it had been done or now.

Information concerning Mr. John Hepburn Irregular Minister at Orr, while he was a Student, after he had left the *Episcopal Party*, because the Bishop of Aberdeen preferred another before him to a good School, for when he tryed him, he Rejected him as unfit. And its well known he was no Presbyterian at Pentland.

TH E said Mr. John getting acquaintance of three famous Ministers in the North of Scotland, which belonged (I think) to the Presbytrie of Deer, and who had been Outed with many others at that Time, for their not Conforming with Prelacy. These Ministers had each of them a famous Nota in their Character; one of them was famous for Learning, and another for Prudence, and the third for Piety. These Ministers put Mr. Hepburn on Trials in order to his being Licenced to Preach. He who excelled for Learning shewed a great deal of Moderation to Mr. Hepburn, as is usual to Men of Learning, for Mr. Hepburn had not discovered himself so as to make themaverse from Licencing of him. The Prudent Minister seemed to comply with the other, but he that had his Nota for Piety still opposed it. Learning and Prudence were at last very earnest to know Pieties Reasons, why he could not comply with them for Licencing Mr. Hepburn. Piety replied, That when he sought Light from GOD about this Affair, he was always Impressed, that if ever that young Man were either a Preacher or Minister, he would be one of the saddest Dividers and Renters, that ever the Church of Scotland saw. Prudence and Learning, seeing Piety so opposite, did forbear all further Procedure about his Tryals.

A second Information anent Mr. John Hepburn.

SINCE I Writ this Paper, and transmitted a Copy of it to a West Country Minister, he gives me in his Letter an account of a Remarkable Story anent him, which not a little Confirms what is said of him, and is as follows, out of his Letter of Return to me, Dated February 19. 1717.

Your account of this last from Doctor Oat's Pocket Book surprizes me, and
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brings to my Mind a Passage, I heard from a Minister present at the Communion in the Fields at Minibole 1678. the Multitude was very great, and they were in a Strait for Preachers to a new Tent they were obliged to set up, and some Body proposed, that Mr. John Hepburn then lately Licenced (as my Author says) should be invited. Old Kerlland who was a great Manager, opposed this very much, and said, in my Relator's hearing, before many Ministers and Gentlemen, when one inquired, why he was against Mr. Hepburn's Preaching. I am much mistaken said he, if that young Man, be not one of the saddest sights that the Church of Scotland ever saw. Here was an early and true Prediction, which his whole Carriage these eight and Thirty Years has abundantly verified. Thir two accounts I may call them Prophetical, on from the North, and another from the West of Scotland, confirms all that I have said against him.

It will not be impertinent after what has been said in the former Discourse anent Mr. John Hepburn's carrying on a continued Separation from the Established Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to give a few Thoughts anent Divisions.

The two theives that the Church and Cause of Christ has been Crucified between in all Ages, are the open and stated Enemies, and professed Opposers of Godliness on the one hand, and ignorant self conceited Churchmen and Professors on the other; the one are the Dividers and Disturbers of the Church; the other the Persecuters, and it's hard to say, which of them are the most dangerous Enemies.

Now these Divisions arise sometimes from Mens taking up Opinions in Matters of Religion; and tho' they have no solid Grounds, yet they propagate them as main and substantial Truths. *Let such Persons consider.*

1st. That were they never so seemingly fixed in their Opinions, yet a more clear and powerful discovery may make them change (as Mr. Hepburn himself did confess when he came from London) for no Christian can expect to be so fully enlightned at first as can admit of no Change; for both Nature and Grace tend to an increase. We are wiser at Age than in our Childhood, and so it is in Spirituals. For Light is a powerful thing, which will make Men Change whtever they will or not.

I know that Prejudice will make Men oppose the Light, and so will make it harder for them to understand and be healed.

2^{dly}. That if their Perswasions and Conclusions about Things in Debate be Peremptory and full, they know not but they may be in an Error and a Delusion, and so not only deceive themselves, but may be Instrumental to seduce others, and pass hard Censures on all that's not of their Way.

And

And after all this, they may either by a good hand of GOD be made to see and confess they were in an Error, (And will not that be a poor mends for their mistake, and the Rent they made in the Church, and the discredit they were to Religion : *To say Alas ! I have been in the Wrong, but I could not help it, I knew no better.*)

Or else by a Judicial stroak of GOD be giv'n over to such notorious Errors and Apostacies as will sufficiently condemn their Way, and justify those whom they Condemned : And such Dividers of the Church ordinarily bring themselves and their Opinions to one of the forementioned Issues.

To such I would say these Things by way of Advice.

1st. Let them hold their first Opinions about Contraverted Points in Religion, with a great deal of holy fear and modesty, with a suspicion of the shallowness and weakness of their own Judgement in these Things, and not be too peremptory, but leave Room for better Information.

2^{dly}. I would have them to know, that it's indispensably necessary, and greatly profitable, either for preventing, or Curing of Mistakes and Errors in Religion : To be well acquainted with, and solidly to believe all the fundamental Truths in Religion, which are the Essentials of Christianity, for he that believeth not these Things as the true Revelations of GOD for Man's Salvation is an Infidel, and not a Christian, though he Live in the Church, and have a Name for Religion. I can hardly think that Person to be a true Convert, that holds the Fundamentals of Christianity only in Opinion and Doubts the verity of them. But the Difference is great, you must know, between these and less necessary Things, which ignorant and young Beginners are not so much concerned about.

Our Business then mainly lyes here, to know and hold fast the substance of Religion, and the clear and certain Truths thereof, and not to be fond of contraverted Things, of which we know not, but afterward we may be ashamed.

3^{dly}. If Controversies in Religion occasion any Divisions where you Live, be sure to look to the Interest of Truth, and good of the Church, and not to be too hastily wedded, and too zealously forward for any Party ; Suspect the weakness of your own Judgment, and spread not your Opinion till you be more clear and certain, and when you see Divisions increasing, study to be among the Peace Makers.

4^{thly} Let the meanest Professor beware of taking Religion upon Trust, or pinning their Faith on any Man's Sleave, though he were a Paul or

an *Apollo*; but do as these, *Acts* 17 and 4. who searched the Scriptures, to see if these Things were so or not.

And you must know, that the more necessary Principles and Duties of Christianity are clearly set down in Scripture, these first you must learn and fixedly believe, for you may sooner believe that Christ God, Man, Mediator is one in Person, and that the humane and Divine Nature is united in that Person: Then you can be able to answer a *Socinian* proving the contrary, or that there is a GOD, or you be fit to hear an *Atheist* prove there's none. What Error is there that a cunning *Sophist* will not put a fair Face upon, and Jumble you if ye be not fixed in Fundamentals.

5thly. Let me warn you of one mistake, To think, that your growing the Knowledge of less necessary and Contraverted Truths, is an high attainment in Religion. Nay to know GOD in Christ by Reading, Hearing, Believing, Praying, &c. is the most profitable Exercise, for the right Knowledge thereof will save you, though you Die ignorant of many Contraversies in Religion. See 1 *Tim.* 1 and 4, and *Chap.* 6 and 3; 4 and 5 *Verses* compared with the 6 *V.*

Therefore let me intreat you, that are yet young Christians and unlearned, not well fixed in the plain and clear Truths of the Gospel, that you would beware in diving in Things that are too deep and dark for you, lest you be benighted and wander, and while you are seeking somewhat you are not called to, ye lose that which ye are called to.

In the next place, I would have you know, that all Divisions tend to the hinderance of the Gospel, and the prosperity of Christ's Kingdom, Satan and Antichrist gain by it, they through the Heat, Pride, and Passion, and the Counterfit Zeal and uncharitableness of such as have a profession, make the ways of GOD to be ill spoken of, rent the Church and hinder the thriving of Christs Kingdom.

See therefore the Things you divide and contend about, be worth the contending for, and whether these Things may not be managed in a more Peaceable way. And you that are young Christians, that has neither Time, Learning or other Helps to be seen in Contraversies; It's not fit, ye fall into Faction and Parties: Far less, that ye be Leaders and Spur up your Teachers, that know more than you and reject them, when they will not follow your Light, such Things are very Ominous, and of ill Presage. Consider also, that such as hurry Persons into this contentious Zeal, make use of this prevailing Argument. O! Its the Cause of GOD, and it's good to be zealous in a good Cause, and will not you own, avow and

and suffer for the Truth. If you will not. *1st.* You betray your Profession and Christs Cause. *2dly* Your pretending to Moderation and Peace is but to follow the Counsel of Flesh and Blood. *3dly.* It discovers your Carnality and Hipocrisy, for his Matters are to be followed with the greatest Zeal.

Ans. I confess all this true, if it be the Cause of GOD indeed. But that is the Question: Surely the main of the Cause lyes in the Weightier, clearer and more Fundamental Points of Religion. *2dly.* It's suspicious when Professors pursue the lesser Things in Religion, the Mint and the Annise with greater Zeal, and Mind less the more material Parts and Duties thereof. *3dly.* It's the more suspicious, that many that contend for these Things, are known to be more ignorant and loose in their Carriage, for all their Pretended Zeal.

Therefore let me advise you, to give some time and pains to know the Fabrick and Order of Religion, that you mistake not, and misplace not the Truths and ways of GOD, putting the lesser before the greater, and these Truths that are more dark and hard to be understood before these that are more plain, clear and necessary, every Work has a method it must be followed by, and if it be not rightly hit upon, it either misgives or goes on more unsuccessfully. Now Religion is as Artificial and curious a Fabrick, and has as good Measures and Methods to accomplish it, as any Work or Building whatsoever. Its like a Tree, lesser Branches spring out of the greater, and these out of the Stock and Root.

I intreat you to inquire a right, both into the Matter and Manner of this Work of GOD's true Service, and your own Salvation, and what may be the most proper methods of working it, and for your direction in this, I recomend you to the Word of GOD, and the Assemblies Catechisme.

In your pretended Zeal for Religion, see that ye be not more taken up about the Novelties, Curiosities and mistakes of Religion, then with the Substance thereof. I find all Men naturally are apt to be taken up with new and strange Things, this is not an Infirmary proper to Children only, *Acts* 17. 19, 20, 21. *Mark* 12. 5, 29. those kind of Hearers, can no more delight in one Preacher, or Profession, or way, than a Glutton in one Dish, &c. for it's but a kind of sensual Pleasure they have in the highest matter. *John* 5. 35. *And ye were willing for a Season to rejoice in the Light.* Such Professors weary of the greatest Truths, most holy, and solid Exercises of Religion, all for new Light, and new Opinions and Fashions in Religion, Old Things seem Low, and new Things High to

them, and to Grasp at some Novelty, as they think is to attain to the greater Maturity and Compleatness; and that's their Ruin till they leave the power and sincerity of Religion quit behind them, it's Satans endeavour, either to keep you on this side, or else cause you to run beyond all Religion. Alas! All prove not true Christians, that flock to Sermons, that have a Profession, and seem to rejoice in the Light, and be taken therewith: many Trees of the Garden of the Church, that when the Gospel Heat and Light Shines and beats on them, do Blossom fair, but many, yea most that hold there; they never come to Fruit bearing, some are blasted, some blown down, some Nipped with Frosts, Some eaten with Worms, Some fall more quickly, the Footman overruns them. Some hang on till the strongest blasts cast them down.

Some deceived by false Teachers, Some by worldly Cares, and the Deceitfulness of Riches. The Lusts of some have deeper Rooting then the Word. The Friends of some has greater Interest in them then Christ, therefore they forsake him to gratifie their Importunity. Some drawn off by Favours, some driven off their Profession by threats, these venture on Damnation to escape Persecution, Some are so Worldly wise, that they can see reason to abate their Zeal, and think they can save their Souls and Bodies too, and prove that to be their Duty, which others call their Sin. Some grow weary of Truth and Duty, as a dull and common Thing. Such as will have a consistency between Christ and their Idols, Religion and their Lusts. There are some that welcome Christ at first, think he will humour them and please them, or at least not contradict them, but when they find he will rule over them, and hold them to a Life they cannot indure, and will not let them take their pleasure, but make them follow that which will ruin them in the World, he is then no longer a guest for them, all this comes to pass, because they never counted the cost, ere they took Christ, had they seen him aright, and the Advantages that attend him, and discerned the necessity and excellency of Godliness, they would never have closed with Christ nor cast him off, as they do. Such as like the light of the Gospel better then the heat that burns them too sore; *Herod* could be Religious thus, and hear *John* gladly, till he touched his Idol that pinched him, so *Felix*. Its a pleasant Thing to behold the Sun, *Ecc. 11. 7.* But not to scorched with it's heat, many will play a while with the Light, that cannot indure to be melted by the Fire; Christ himself promised at a distance, was greatly desired by the *Jews*: But when he came they could not hear him, his Doctrine and Life was so contrary to their Expectations. *Mal.*

3. 1, 2, 3. Many little thinks when they come first to Christ, that he will cast them into the Fire & refine them, and purge away their Dross, and cast them a new into the Mould of the Gospel, ay but he will do so, and melt down our Pride, Envy, Passion, &c. All our Lusts and Idols and fashion us a new, making us Humble, Holy Meek, and sober in all manner of Conversation and say as *Rom. 6: 17, 18.*

To conclude this Discourse, I would have all of us seriously to consider that all Divisions, Schisms, Separations want of Meekness, Gentleness, Charity, or Love to one another (tho' we be not all of the same Siceze, either as to Knowledge or Practice) are condemned in Scripture. *2 Tim. 2. V. 23. But foolish and unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. Rom. 16. 17. Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them. Verse 18. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Bellies; and by good Words and fair Speeches, deceive the Hearts of the Simple.*

FINIS.

POSTSCRIPT

I am firmly perswaded by all that I have either read or heard of Mr. *Hepburn*, that he ought to be held as unordained, for when I came hither from *Peebles*, I took him to be the first Minister of *Orr*, not doubting but the *Presbytrie* had called for the Testificate of his Ordination, according to the constant Custom of the Church, which is usual every where, how he has slipt the Head I know not, But if he cannot Document it, he ought to be held as the greater Cheat, and what his Baptisms and Marriages ought to be esteemed, the World may Judge, and indeed his whole Life has been nothing else, therefore it concerns the *General Assembly* to exoner themselves to the succeeding Judicatures and People of *Scotland*, to committ it to the *Commission* of the Kirk, who have the most part of his processes already, that they call for the rest of them, and put all in Print, to confound all his lying Printed piece. I have no Document by me, to tell what Year the *Commission* of the Kirk did repon Mr. *Hepburn*. But I find when the *Assembly* 1708, *Aprile* 23. came to consider that Affair they did judge, that these Brethren of the *Commission* who did Vote for taking the Sentence of Deposition of Mr. *Hepburn*, did think in their Consciences, that there doing so, was in the present Juncture, for the good of this Church; But they found, that there were several Irregularities in that their procedure, in Reponing him against their Sentence, without such Engagements as the *Assembly* thought sufficient, or any acknowledgement of guilt, and in Reponing him to the same Church, contrary to standing Acts of *Assembly*. *Resol. 1st.* They had no power to take off the Sentence of their Judicatory, but only Recommended it to them, and it was not so long to the *Assembly*, but they might delayed such a momentuos Matter till the proper Judicatory met. *Res. 2d.* They should have given Reasons, for Conscience Acting without Reason is a bad Conscience. *Res. 3d.* It's too evident they acted without Reason: For I pose them, if they saw any Reformation in him all the Time of his confinement. *Res. 4th.* The *Assembly* 1704, found several Irregularities in that

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